**Beware of False Brethren!**

***Good News*, January 1960, pp. 3, 12**

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You could be deceived by false brethren. Here is how you can recognize them.

   THERE is an amazing prophecy concerning our Church which you probably have never understood. This prophecy is little known, yet you probably have read it!

   This startling prophecy concerning God's Church today was given by the prophet Daniel. Many have read this important prophecy, but applied it to some other people, or thought that it concerned only ancient history. But this prophecy is a living and dynamic warning for you and me. We need to understand prophecy here and now.

**A Prophecy for Today**

   Daniel prophesied: "The people that do KNOW their God shall be strong, and do exploits" ([Dan. 11:32](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Dan.%2011.32)). Such a statement could refer only to God's people. Now notice what follows: "And they THAT UNDERSTAND among the people shall instruct many; yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days" (verse 33). Here is a very brief summary of how God's Church has been persecuted down through the centuries.

   Some commentators has incorrectly applied this to the Jews. But it could not refer to the Jewish people of our day! The Jews do not KNOW their God, nor do they UNDERSTAND, nor do they instruct many in the ways of God.

   This prophecy concerns GOD'S CHURCH. Continuing "Now when they [God's people] shall fall, they shall be holpen [helped] with a little help: BUT MANY SHALL CLEAVE TO THEM WITH FLATTERIES" (verse 34). Here is the point that most people have missed. Many individuals who assemble with us on God's Sabbath, or in God's Feasts, are prophesied to cleave to us with flatteries!

   Other translations make this even clearer. The Moffatt Translation states: "Many shall join them under FALSE PRETENSE." Yes, some do JOIN THEMSELVES to God's Church, with false pretenses, claiming to be true brethren, claiming to obey God, claiming to have God's Holy Spirit, and yet they are not a part of the body of Christ. God has not JOINED them to His Church!

   In "The Complete Bible", AN AMERICAN TRANSLATION by Gordon-Goodspeed we read: **"Many shall attach themselves in HYPOCRISY." These people who attach themselves to God's Church assemble under false pretense. They are inwardly hypocritical, and flatter or deceive others.**

   If you have the idea that all who come to God's Church are truly converted Christians, this scripture ought to dispel this delusion! There are some among us who are not converted. They are not a real spiritually LIVING part of the body of Christ. They are not letting Christ do His work in them. They have not truly and completely surrendered their lives to Christ in full repentance.

   Notice that this prophecy continues right up to the time of the end (verse 35), to the return of Jesus Christ. Here is a prophecy which concerns us today!

**Ancient Israel a Type of the Church**

**Ancient Israel also had many people who were not a fleshly part of the physical congregation (Church) in the wilderness. This MIXED MULTITUDE is mentioned in**[**Exodus 12:38**](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Exod%2012.38)**. "And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle." That is not the end of the story. Notice**[**Numbers 11:4**](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Num%2011.4)**: "And the mixed multitude that was among them FELL A LUSTING: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, 'Who shall give us flesh to eat?'" The mixed multitude were the first to start lusting. Lusting — or coveting — is sin. The "mixed multitude"' sinned and the children of Israel followed right after them.**

**This "mixed multitude" was instrumental in causing Israel to sin. It became so bad in the time of Jeremiah, that he had to completely separate the "mixed multitude" from the children of Israel.**

**In like manner, we must also beware of "false brethren" who are prophesied to come among us. In Paul's time false brethren came into the Church unawares. Paul states in**[**Galatians 2:4**](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Gal%202.4)**that "false brethren" came to spy out the spiritual liberty a true Christian has in Christ Jesus. They subtly seek to bring weaker brethren back into bondage of sin. They are also among us today, seeking to mislead weak brethren.**

   In New Testament times just ONE MAN caused a WHOLE congregation to sin. Part of this account is recorded in I Corinthians 5. Because of this man's sin, the whole Church became puffed up (verse 2). They became guilty with him in his evil deeds. Because of such a serious sin, Paul rebuked them sharply. Because of his sin this man had to be put out of the Church for a while. The second letter of Corinthians from Paul shows that he was accepted back into the Church because he truly repented of his sin.

   Paul instructed the Church previously that the brethren should not company (associate) with those in the Church who were openly violating God's laws (verses 9 and 11). A Christian should not associate, or even eat with such a person!

**Also False Teachers**

   Besides false brethren, false ministers and teachers have come among God's people on many occasions. Peter mentions that there were false prophets in ancient time among the children of Israel, just as there would be false teachers who would try to set themselves up as teachers among God's people today (II Peter 2). Such men PRIVATELY, secretly bring in heresies, denying Jesus Christ by their WORKS ([Titus 1:16](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Titus%201.16)) as WELL as their tongues! Notice that these men bring such teachings in "privately" (verse 1) and not openly. Those who upset some in God's Church today usually do it PRIVATELY, with stealth, in private homes and secretly, lest God's ministers find out and put a sudden stop to it. Such men want to seduce and deceive you brethren of God's Church! These wicked men with feigned words, smooth speech, false pretenses, and hypocrisy make themselves appear as if they were VERY RELIGIOUS AND HOLY. They are like the Pharisees of Christ's time who APPEARED holy to some people but were like "whitewashed graves" — "'whitened sepulchers" — full of spiritual "dead men's bones." **Some of you brethren look ON THE OUTSIDE, and are sometimes deceived!**

   If a false brother personally came to you, agreeing in principle with what you say, APPARENTLY AGREEING with God's ministers, would you then be fooled when HE GRADUALLY BEGINS TO TWIST THE SCRIPTURES, TO BRING PRIVATE ACCUSATIONS AGAINST THE BRETHREN and certain ministers, or Mr. Armstrong, or to bring some "new doctrine"?

   There are some people who have come among God's people today who are guilty of these very things! They appear to be righteous. They have a form of godliness, but they actually deny the power of God working in the Church of God today. These people DESPISE THE GOVERNMENT THAT GOD HAS SET IN HIS CHURCH. They are self-willed. They privately find fault and speak evil of those whom God has set in His Church. They will seek to go to your homes in order to bring accusations against the brethren, and against God's ministers. They do this PRIVATELY. They may not at first put big stress on deceitful ideas as they do not want to be detected. But they will sneak around to others and privately try to lure others to their ideas of destruction. You may even know such people, and yet are not aware of their deceitful tricks. These false brethren, instead of building up, speak evil, or tear down. They discourage weaker brethren, plant doubts in their minds, try to stir up bitterness between brethren.

**"Blemishes on Our Feast Days"**

   Jude also mentions wicked men who are blemishes on our love feasts and Holy Days. "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God unto lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" ([Jude 4](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Jude%204)). Here is a message and a warning for all the Church through history. This message did not concern the time of Jude only. Such conditions will exist until the second coming of Jesus Christ! Jude mentions in verse 12: "These [people] are spots in your feasts of charity [Feast Days], when they feast with you.

   John calls these men who set themselves up IN THE PLACE of Christ "antichrists." An "antichrist" is one who sits in judgment of God's ministers and His Church. They are not subject to the government of Christ. Notice the history of the Church through the centuries in [I John 2:19](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1%20John%202.19): "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that [the] antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for IF THEY HAD BEEN OF US, THEY WOULD NO DOUBT HAVE CONTINUED WITH US: but they went out, that they might be made manifest THAT THEY WERE NOT ALL OF US."

   This warning especially occurred in apostolic days. But Daniel shows it is a warning for all ages. There are such people among those of God's Church today! Some of you may be deceived by them! You need to BEWARE. Do not be deceived any longer. Christ warns us that the love of many will turn cold. Some of you, because of the iniquity or sin of others, AND BECAUSE OF YOUR OWN PRIVATE SIN, will follow such people right out of God's Church. The apostle Paul prophesied that in the last days some would depart from the faith ([I Tim. 4:1](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1%20Tim.%204.1)). It behooves us to beware lest we follow others right out of God's Church, INSTEAD OF FOLLOWING CHRIST!

**Mark Those That Cause Division**

   God instructs us through the Apostle Paul: "Now I beseech you, brethren, MARK THEM WHICH CAUSE DIVISIONS and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; AND AVOID THEM" ([Rom. 16:17](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Rom.%2016.17)). If you know of someone who is causing division in the Church, who is accusing the brethren, and who is committing offense contrary to what we have been taught, come to God's ministers who will MARK him. Then you should avoid any such person! You should not "company," or associate with that person. Paul even makes this instruction stronger: "Now WE COMMAND YOU, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye WITHDRAW YOURSELVES from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" ([II Thess. 3:6](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/2%20Thess.%203.6)).

   Here is a DIRECT COMMAND from one of God's apostles concerning such people. Paul taught certain practices in the Church, just as God's ministers today teach certain practices, which the Church is to follow. If someone continually refuses to accept the teachings of Christ through His Church, a true Christian should withdraw from him!

   Continuing in [II Thessalonians 3:7](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/2%20Thess%203.7), we read: "For yourselves know how ye ought TO FOLLOW US [the apostles, God's ministers]: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you." We are to follow Christ and the example of God's ministers as they follow Christ, and as Christ lives within them. But some of you brethren, follow those who APPEAR spiritual, who use spiritual phraseology, but who set themselves up in the place of Christ to judge God's ministers and His Church.

   Paul also states: "BE YE FOLLOWERS OF ME, EVEN AS I AM OF CHRIST" ([I Cor. 11:1](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1%20Cor.%2011.1))

   Since we have been instructed to mark those who cause divisions, we also should follow those who are good examples in the Church. Notice them, and see their good works. "Brethren, be followers together of me, and MARK THEM which walk so as ye have us for an example" ([Phil. 3:17](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Phil.%203.17)). Brethren, we are to follow those who walk as Paul walked. We are to follow those who walk as Jesus Christ walked. But Paul goes on to warn, in verse 18, that there are others who are enemies of Jesus Christ, who are concerned about earthly things, even though they may PROFESS THEMSELVES to be religious. We need to discern through whom God is working.

   In [Philippians 4:9](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Phil%204.9) Paul brings out the point that those whom he had taught, who had received and heard from him, should do the things that he had done. Are we today following those whom God is now using in His ministry?

   "REMEMBER THEM WHICH HAVE THE RULE OVER YOU, who have spoken unto you the word of God whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation [conduct]" ([Heb. 13:7](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Heb.%2013.7)). It's time you recognized through whom God RULES the Church — through His ministers or those who secretly sow discord and lead to division and doubts.

**Follow Jesus Christ**

   God has given leaders in His Church for the perfecting of the saints and to build up the body of Jesus Christ. God set them in office so that we all might come to a unity of the faith, might become perfect individuals, measuring up to the stature of Jesus Christ! Jesus Christ is our aim — our "yardstick." We are to measure up to Him, to follow His "steps" ([I Peter 2:21](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1%20Pet%202.21)).

   If we use Christ as our example and His servants, we will never fall away through the clever deception of false brethren. Nor will we fall away with those whose love grows cold.

   By recognizing that there are such people among us, we can beware and avoid those who set up themselves to teach the brethren.

**Yes, many have joined themselves to God's Church, MAY EVEN HAVE BEEN BAPTIZED; but they have not yielded themselves to God. They are yet carnal! There have always been those who have come among God's people — who have influenced weak brethren by their smooth and deceitful speech, their flatteries and their hypocrisy. You have been warned. You need not be deceived. Now is the time to be on your guard — to beware, lest you follow false brethren into the lake of fire.**

   If you should fall you will have ONE PERSON TO BLAME — yourself — because you have been forewarned! You will be the only person to blame! Will you heed the warning and keep close to God through prayer, Bible study, fasting — and be submissive to God's government in His Church?